



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY RANGOON

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Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel Russel Discusses Bilateral Relationship and Concerns about Violence in Rakhine State

Yangon – Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs [Daniel Russel](#) visited Myanmar April 9 – 10 to meet with senior Union Government officials in Naypyitaw and Yangon, including President Thein Sein, Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin, Information Minister Aung Kyi, and Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maung Maung Ohn, as well as representatives of civil society and diplomats, to discuss the U.S.-Myanmar bilateral relationship, recent development in the country, particularly the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Rakhine state, and regional issues in connection with Myanmar's chairmanship of ASEAN. Assistant Secretary Russel also met with representatives of United Nations' agencies and international NGOs who have operated in Rakhine State. Assistant Secretary Russel raised U.S. concerns about press freedoms.

"The United States is deeply committed to supporting a prosperous and stable Asia-Pacific region and its institutions, especially ASEAN, and our bilateral relationship with Myanmar is a key part of that effort," said Russel. "We look forward to deepening our relationships in the region by strengthening democratic institutions, promoting respect for rule of law, increasing people-to-people ties, and expanding trade and investment.

"The United States strongly supports the Union Government's efforts to advance the political reform agenda, improve livelihoods for its people, and achieve a just and durable national peace. In the past two years, this government has made important strides in the path to reform.

"However, we are concerned about recent violence in Rakhine State. The departure of humanitarian aid agencies and personnel from Rakhine State due to recent violence leaves all communities in the area without access to life-saving medical services, as well as sufficient water, sanitation, and food for the most vulnerable populations.

"Violence and instability undermines any country's ability to establish a prosperous democratic state. We encourage the government to take a more active role in resolving these issues, to work toward a durable solution that addresses the underlying causes of conflict in Rakhine State, and to create the conditions for sustainable peace and development, with which the United States is prepared to assist."

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